



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SAN DIEGO COUNTY LEADS NATION IN ORGANIC GROWING

County Agriculture Officials Register Over 300 Organic Growers, According to New Report

San Diego County is in the forefront of organic growing, with more organic growers than any other county in the United States, according to the new Crop Statistics and Annual Report released by the County Department of Agriculture, Weights and Measures.

"Local farmers grow a wide variety of organic produce," said County Agricultural Commissioner Bob Atkins. "The County works with these farmers to ensure that they are properly registered and certified. This assures the consumer that when purchasing organic produce, it is really organic and grown in accordance with the law."

San Diego County is home to 317 registered growers producing more than 140 different crops with gross sales topping \$28.6 million dollars. Crops include popular items such as oranges, grapes and avocados as well as more unusual fare like cherimoyas, loquats and jujubes.

Before a product can be labeled 'organic,' the grower must meet federal and state organic standards. Organic food is produced without using most conventional pesticides, fertilizers made with synthetic ingredients or sewage sludge, bioengineering, or ionizing radiation.

In addition to registering growers as organic, local agricultural inspectors review growers' records to ensure compliance with laws related to products sold as organic.

For more information about organic farming, visit the County Department of Agriculture, Weights and Measures Web site at http://www.sdcounty.ca.gov/awm/organic_farming.html.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Commissioner Bob Atkins is available for interviews; a tour of a family owned, organic farm and interview with the grower can be arranged upon request.

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Top 10 Organically Grown Crops in County

Crop	Acreage
1) Oranges	1,275.5
2) Avocados	1,121.6
3) Lemons	481.5
4) Grapefruit	276.0
5) Tangelos/ Tangerines	179.7
6) Berries	51.2
7) Persimmons	27.8
8) Carrots	13.1
9) Tomatoes	12.2
10) Strawberries	9.5

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